

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending in the application. New claims 8 and 9 have been added.

Substitute Specification

Minor changes have been made to the specification to place it in better form for U.S. practice.

The above-noted specification changes are set forth in the attached Substitute Specification. The Substitute Specification does not contain new matter.

A Comparison Specification showing the matter being added to and deleted from the original specification is also submitted herewith.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to approve the Substitute Specification.

Double Patenting

Claims 1 and 3-7 have been provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 1 of copending Application No. 10/568,457 (hereinafter, "copending Application"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants respectfully traverse this provisional rejection for the following reasons.

Claim 1 of copending Application requires the following limitations, which are not required in claim 1 of the present application:

- a heater that heats the steam generated by the steam generating unit so as to turn the steam into superheated steam;
- an exhaust port provided in the external circulation path, the exhaust port through which the gas sucked in through the suction port is exhausted to an outside;
- a damper that opens and closes the exhaust port; and

a control unit that controls the damper so as to open/close the exhaust port in accordance with a movement of the door.

In view of this, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 of the present application is patentably distinct from claim 1 of the copending Application at least because claim 1 of the present application is neither anticipated by, nor would have been obvious over claim 1 of the copending Application.

Claims 3-7, variously dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 and 4 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Cohn et al. (USP 5,802,963). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Cohn merely discloses an assembly in which steam is intermingled with a steam of hot air flowing through an air duct 19.

In contrast, according to the present invention, an ejector formed coaxially with an external circulation path makes it possible to efficiently such steam into the external circulation path.

Cohn fails to disclose or suggest such a feature.

Claim 4, dependent on claim 1, is allowable at least for its dependency on claim 1.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 3 and 5-7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cohn. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 3 and 5-7, variously dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claim 2 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 2 has been amended to include all of the limitations of claim 1 to place it in condition for allowance.

A favorable determination by the Examiner and allowance of this claim is earnestly solicited.

New Claims

New claims 8 and 9, variously dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

A favorable determination by the Examiner and allowance of these claims is earnestly solicited.

Conclusion

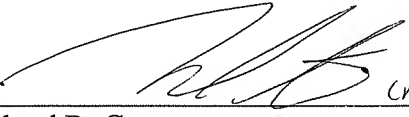
Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and objections, and allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Maki Hatsumi (#40,417) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or to credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments: Substitute Specification - 15 pages
Comparison Specification - 22 pages